Memorandum

July 5, 2011

To: David Goldberg
From: Mark Braseth
Subject: Place Making: "Micro-Hood" Concept and Tools for Achieving a Greater Sense of Place

Overview

This memo addresses the desire of Broadview, Bitter Lake, Haller Lake (BBH) neighborhood to create a more vibrant neighborhood identity and community. Covered is what residents have said, a formal objective, and tools to achieve this desire.

What We Heard

Community members and residents of the Broadview, Bitter Lake, and Haller Lake (BBH) neighborhood have expressed a need for greater connectivity, physically and socially. Residents have expressed a desire for a stronger neighborhood identity and sense of place.

One strategy discussed is creating a hierarchy of activity centers at key locations. Specifically, Aurora would continue to serve as a regional commercial center with greater pedestrian access to BBH. Linden would become the urban village of BBH, consisting of neighborhood commercial business and multifamily housing. Greenwood is to have smaller commercial centers, "hamlets," at key intersections. While this strategic approach will help the physical environment of BBH to feel more vibrant and connected there is still a need to connect residents physically with those environments as well as with one another.

One suggestion is a focus on "micro-hoods," a concept that uses hyper local initiatives to create a greater sense of place and stronger community. Micro-hood strategies can include physical implementations such as pocket parks, art in the streets, and the allocation of street food. They can also include programs implemented by community organizations and neighborhood associations, such as monthly pot-lucks, block parties, and outdoor movies.

Objective

Create a greater sense of place and neighborhood identity that connects residents to their neighborhood and to one another.

Tools

There is no single strategy to create a sense of place and neighborhood identity; rather it takes several varying strategies.

The tools discussed are split into two categories, those that can be implemented by the community and those that can be implemented by the city. They include ways to address the built environment and programs that can help create a neighborhood identity.

Implementation tools are not limited to the following.

Community

1. Scheduling a mobile food cart/café to serve the neighborhood routinely.
   a. Similar to the Tea-horse in Portland, OR (see Best Practices section of this memo). http://cityrepair.org/projects/t-horse/
2. Attracting a street food vendor.

  a. One resident has suggested street café/or sandwich cart at 3rd and N. 125th (by the Broadview Church).

3. Painting street murals at an intersection.
  a. This has the effect of creating a fun and family-friendly environment and will provide a unique "stamp" for the neighborhood.
  b. Additionally, it can calm traffic and make it a safer environment for kids playing. http://cityrepair.org/how-to/placemaking/intersectionrepair/
  c. Can be implemented by using matching funds from the Department of Neighborhoods (DON). http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/nmf/about.htm

4. Brand the neighborhood.
  a. One branding strategy includes using neighborhood identity signs. This could be in the form of banners on street lights.
  b. Come up with ten key things to do in the BBH neighborhood. If cannot come up with 10, create them.

5. Application of street art.
  a. These can be installations by local artists, or a kids program.
  b. One strategy would be to partner with Metro's Bus Shelter Mural Program. http://metro.kingcounty.gov/prog/sheltermural/shelter_mural.html

6. Decorating streets on special holidays.
  a. Attached is a link to an article that discusses the treatments used by Paris and its impacts. Paris is not an ideal example but the treatments used can be scaled and done at a hyper local level. http://www.pps.org/blog/lessons-from-paris-high-impact-low-cost-street-decorations-in-the-city-of-lights/

7. Community led events and programs.
  a. Ideas for events and programs are endless a few ideas are:
   i. Monthly waffle making event at someone's house or the community center.
   ii. Scheduled block party
   iii. Monthly pot-lucks

8. Annual neighborhood clean up
  a. Neighborhood clean-ups bring residents together in taking pride in their neighborhood.
  b. Seattle Public Utilities can help supply trash bags, trash pickers, and other tools to help with successful neighborhood clean-up events. http://www.seattle.gov/util/Services/Garbage/KeepSeattleClean/Spring_Clean/index.asp

9. Install kiosks to post neighborhood events, news, and other noteworthy happenings.

10. Attract a farmer's market.

11. Repurpose underused or vacated property

12. Underused property can be opportunities for residents to lobby for a pocket park, farmers market, or other community space.

13. Create a local farmer's market where home gardeners and P-Patch gardeners can sell/trade/ or barter their surplus fruits and vegetables.

14. Educational gardening
  a. Contact Seattle Tilth (who teaches gardening classes to both adults and kids) to run a hands on gardening class that teaches skills that can be performed at home gardens or at the community garden.
  b. http://seattletilth.org/learn/classes-and-workshops/adultclassessorted

15. Get youth involved in gardening at the Bitter Lake P-Patch.

16. Create a neighborhood services directory.
    a. On a volunteer basis participating residents would list their name and a service they can provide. Volunteered hours would be kept on record and those hours can be made in exchange for services.
    b. For instance, say Sue needs her computer fixed. Sue would go to the directory and see that Laura can fix computers. Sue had already helped Larry with a mechanical issue with his car and so has 3 hours of logged time that can be used in exchange for the computer help.
    c. This link: http://www.transitioncharlottevt.org/index.htm provides an example of such a directory.

City

1. Allowing for food carts to serve the area.
2. Allowing street mural painting.
3. Installing pocket parks, where applicable and possible.
4. Applying decorative pedestrian treatments to pedestrian areas.
    a. A few examples include pedestrian lighting, street furniture, flower hanging baskets, street lamp banners, etc. Such treatments were used in the West Seattle Junction, an urban village hub, to help maintain its small town neighborhood identity and feel.
    b. https://www.seattle.gov/DPD/cms/groups/pan/@pan/@plan/@proj/documents/Web_Informational/dpd_001110.pdf
5. Triangulate key neighborhood amenities.
    a. This refers to clustering of diverse neighborhood uses. For instance, placing a community center, restaurants and businesses, a library, and housing all adjacent to one another[1]
    b. (http://www.placemakingchicago.com/cmsfiles/placemaking_guide.pdf)

Best Practices

Crown Hill (Seattle, Washington)-Waffle Sundays
http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/localnews/2014190301_goodneighbors11m.html
On the first Sunday of the month Roger Kluck and his wife, Betsy, provide the waffles and guests provide the toppings. The tradition started five years ago. Between 25 and 45 neighbors attend Waffle Sunday.

Boulder, Colorado-Community Gardening Project
http://www.naturalhomeandgarden.com/Food-Producing-Gardens/Cultivating-Community-Supported-Agriculture.aspx
In a suburb of Boulder, Colorado participating residents have dedicated small plots of their yard to growing fruits and vegetables to be sold at a farmer's market and through Community Support Agriculture (CSA) subscriptions. This project has had the effect of connecting residents to the food they eat as well as with one another. Kip Nash, a resident of the community and founder of the organization Community Roots, began the project in 2005.

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[1] Project for Public Spaces and Metropolitan Planning Council. "A Guide to Neighborhood Placemaking In Chicago." (2008): pgs. 1-74

Charlotte, Vermont-Community Asset Directory
http://www.transitioncharlottevt.org/index.htm
In Charlotte, Vermont the organization, Transition Town Charlotte, has catalogued the skills of the residents. This directory is accessible to all and can be used to acquire the help and advice from people within the community. Soap making and construction are two examples of the wide variety of skills offered. This strategy offers community members chances to connect and help one another.

Portland, Oregon-T-Horse
http://cityrepair.org/projects/t-horse/legend-of-the-t-horse/
In Portland, the organization, City Repair Project, held regular neighborhood tea parties. They transformed a truck into a mobile kitchen-space and went from neighborhood to neighborhood serving tea and desserts for free. The truck provided neighborhood residents the opportunity meet in an informal and unique environment.

An important aspect of the T-Horse was that neighbors would meet the truck as it arrived to help set up. The T-Horse modeled that everyone has the opportunity to take responsibility in making their neighborhood, "socially, economically and environmentally sustainable." The T-Horse stopped running in December 2010.

Key Factors
The following two factors are consistent in each of the examples discussed above.

Community Led
Each of the above examples is led by community members and relies heavily on participation from fellow neighbors. In Portland Neighbors meet the -Horse as it arrives to set up while in boulder neighbors grow their crops separately but come together to sell them.

Provides All Community Members Opportunities to Participate and Contribute
Opportunities for a community member to give and receive are present in each of the examples. For example, on "Waffle Sundays" neighbors not only participate in the social gathering but they also are provide for each other by bringing toppings. Furthermore, In Charlotte the Community Asset Directory allows neighbors to receive and give help.

Conclusion
We heard from BBH residents a desire to create a more vibrant and connected neighborhood both physically and socially. Doing so will require both physical and social changes. An important aspect in creating a neighborhood identity is that it comes from the community, ensuring the community is invested in the project. Furthermore, it is important that all community members are given the chance to participate and contribute. Doing so helps to build cohesion and a sense of team work amongst a neighborhood.